

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

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FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : BEXP ENRG EINV QA US

SUBJECT : LYKES BROS. STEAMSHIP COMPANY'S PROPOSAL FOR
JOINTLY OWNED STEAMSHIP LINE FOR TRANSPORTATION
OF PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

REF: KUWAIT 4672

1. WE HAVE RECEIVED JAN 9 LETTER FROM WILLIAM B. TAYLOR INFORMING US OF HIS VISIT TO DOHA ACCOMPANYING RICHARD E. BERKEFELD, VICE PRESIDENT, LYKES BROTHERS STEAMSHIP COMPANY. VISIT SCHEDULED FEB 10-12 AND ACCORDING LETTER, PURPOSE IS TO CONDUCT EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH GOQ TO DETERMINE INTEREST IN A JOINTLY OWNED STEAMSHIP LINE FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS TO US AND FOREIGN PORTS. LETTER REQUESTS THAT WE MAKE APPROPRIATE APPOINTMENTS FOR DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT AND INFORM TAYLOR THROUGH NEA/ARP AND/OR EMBASSY KUWAIT OF PROGRAM. INFORMATION BELOW SHOULD BE PASSED TO TAYLOR BY ARP BEFORE JAN 30. LETTER DOES NOT INDICATE WHERE TAYLOR CAN BE REACHED, ALTHOUGH IT LISTS MAIN OFFICES OF LYKES AS HOUSTON, NEW ORLEANS AND GALVESTON.

2. ON JAN 26 WE SPOKE WITH KAMAL SALEH, AMIR'S SPECIAL ADVISOR ON COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS; SALEH IS ALSO EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QATARI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. HE HAD APPROACHED EMBASSY SEVERAL

MONTHS AGO TO INFORM IS THAT GOQ WAS CONSIDERING INVESTMENT IN FOREIGN SHIPPING COMPANY (REFTEL). ACCORDING SALEH, GOQ MAY BE INTERESTED IN JOINT STEAMSHIP COMPANY. HE SAID THAT FORMATION OF SUCH COMPANY HAS BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION AMONG LOWER GULF STATES, SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT FOR SOME TIME AND IF THIS DOESN'T WORK OUT (AND HE IMPLIED THAT HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD), GOQ WOULD BE MOST INTERESTED IN JOINT VENTURE WITH FOREIGN SHIPPING FIRM. HE SAID HE SHOULD HAVE CLEARER PICTURE OF SITUATION BEFORE ARRIVAL OF LYKES OFFICIALS. WE FIXED APPOINTMENT FOR THEM AT 9:30 ON FEB 11 WITH SALEH.

3. RE LYKES' PROPOSAL FOR JOINT OWNERSHIP OF STEAMSHIP LINE FOR TRANSPORTATION OF PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, SALEH SAID THIS COULD HAVE SOME APPEAL IN LIGHT OF POSSIBLE US OIL CARGO PREFERENCE LEGISLATION. HOWEVER, HE SAID GOQ PRESENTLY INVOLVED WITH OAPC JOINT TANKER PROJECT AND HE THOUGHT QATARIS WOULD GIVE PREFERENCE TO JOINT VENTURE UNDER OAPC. HE SUGGESTED, HOWEVER, THAT LYKES REPS DISCUSS THIS PROPOSAL WITH APPROPRIATE OFFICIAL AT MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM. WE WILL ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR, ABDULLA SALLAT.

4. PLEASE INFORM TAYLOR THAT IT APPEARS HIS ITINERARY IS INCORRECT. ACCORDING HIS LETTER, LYKES REPS WILL ARRIVE DOHA ON SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES FLT 343 ON FEB 10. THERE IS NO SUCH FLT ON FEB 10. PLEASE ADVISE REVISED ETA SO THAT EMBASSY CAN CONFIRM OR CHANGE APPOINTMENTS.

5. WE ASSUME THAT LYKES IS CARRYING ITS PROPOSAL TO A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN AREA. HOWEVER, EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BY MAJOR US FIRM IN JOINT VENTURE WITH GOQ MAY HAVE SOME APPEAL HERE AND EVEN IF IT DOES NOT RPT NOT PRODUCE SPECIFIC RESULTS, IT IS BENEFICIAL IN MAINIFESTING US BUSINESS INTEREST IN AREA.
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